

18

L E T T E R S

OF

C A S S I U S M. C L A Y.

SLAVERY : THE EVIL—THE REMEDY.

To the Editor of the Tribune :

"And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? * * * Indeed, I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just: that His justice cannot sleep for ever: that, considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."

Jefferson's Notes on Virginia.

THOMAS JEFFERSON never thought of the absurdity of debating the question whether Slavery be an evil, nor was he indulgent to the delusive idea that it would be perpetual. He reduced the subject to its certain elements: the master must liberate the slave, or the slave will exterminate the master. This conclusion is not weakened by the history of the past. The same color in the ancient Republics enabled the State to use emancipation as a safety-valve; yet notwithstanding the thorough amalgamation of the freed man with the free born, servile wars nearly extinguished by violence the noblest nations of antiquity: while no man dare say that Slavery was not the secret cause of their ultimate ruin. But if "His justice" should "sleep for ever," and the tragedy so awfully predicted should never occur, still must we regard Slavery as the greatest evil that ever cursed a nation.

Slavery is an evil to the slave, by depriving nearly three millions of men of the best gift of God to man—liberty. I stop here—this is enough of itself to give us a full anticipation of the long catalogue of human wo, and physical and intellectual and moral abasement which follows in the wake of Slavery.

Slavery is an evil to the master. It is utterly subservient of the Christian religion. It violates the great law upon which that religion is based, and on account of which it vaunts its preëminence.

It corrupts our offspring by necessary association with an abandoned and degraded race, engrafting in the young mind and heart all the vices and none of the virtues.

It is the source of indolence and destructive of all industry, which in times past among the wise has ever been regarded as the first friend of religion, morality and happiness. The poor despise labor, because Slavery makes it degrading. The mass of slaveholders are idlers.

It is the mother of ignorance. The system of Common Schools has not succeeded in a single Slave State. Slavery and Education are natural enemies. In the Free States, 1 in 53 over twen-

ty-one years is unable to read and write : in the Slave States, 1 in 13.3 is unable to write and read !

It is opposed to literature even in the educated classes. Noble aspirations and true glory depend upon virtue and good to man. The conscious injustice of Slavery hangs as a mill-stone about the necks of the sons of genius, and will not let them up !

It is destructive of all mechanical excellence. The Free States build ships and steam-cars for the nations of the world—the Slave States import the handles for their axes—these primitive tools of the architect. The educated population will not work at all—the uneducated must work without science and of course without skill. If there be a given amount of mechanical genius among a people, it is of necessity developed in proportion as a whole or part of the population are educated. In the Slave States the small portion educated is inert.

It is antagonistic to the Fine Arts. Creations of beauty and sublimity are the embodiments of the soul's imaginings; the fountain must surely be pure and placid whence these glorious and immortal and lovely images are reflected. Liberty has ever been the mother of the Arts.

It retards population and wealth. Compare New-York and Virginia, Tennessee and Ohio—States of equal natural advantages and equal ages. The wealth of the Free States is in a much greater ratio even superior to that of the Slave States, than the population of the Free is greater than that of the Slave States. The manufactures of the Slave as compared to those of the Free States are as 1 to 4 nearly, as is shown by statistics. I consider the accumulation of wealth in a less ratio.

It impoverishes the soil and defaces the loveliest features of Nature. Washington advises a friend to remove from Pennsylvania to Virginia—saying that cheap lands in Virginia were as good as the dear lands in Pennsylvania, and, anticipating the abolition of Slavery, would be more productive. His anticipations have perished—Slavery still exists—the wild briar and the red fox are now there the field-growth and the inhabitants !

It induces national poverty. Slaves consume more and produce less than Freemen. Hence illusive wealth, prodigality and bankruptcy, without the capability of bearing adversity or recovering from its influence : then come despair, dishonor and crime.

It is an evil to the free laborer, by forcing him by the laws of competition—supply and demand—to work for the wages of the slave, food and shelter. The poor, in the Slave States, are the

most destitute native population in the United States.

It sustains the public sentiment in favor of the deadly affray and the duel—those relics of a barbarous age.

It is the mother and the nurse of *Lynch law*, which I regard as the most horrid of all crimes, not even excepting parricide, which ancient legislators thought too impossible to be ever supposed in the legal code. If all the blood thus shed in the South could be gathered together, the horrid image which Emmett drew of the cruelty of his judges would grow pale in view of this greater terror.

Where all these evils exist, how can Liberty, Constitutional Liberty, live ? No, indeed, it can not, and has not existed in conjunction with Slavery. We are but nominal Freemen, for though born to all the privileges known to the Constitution and the laws, written and prescriptive, we have seen struck down with the leaden hand of Slavery, the most glorious banner that Freedom ever bore in the face of men—"Trial by Jury—Liberty of Speech and of the Press."—The North may be liable to censure in Congress for freedom of speech—may lose the privileges of the Post Office and the Right of Petition, and perhaps yet be free ; but we of the land of Slavery are ourselves slaves ! Alas for the hypocritical cry of liberality and equality which demagogues sound for ever in our ears ! The Declaration of Independence comes back from all nations, not in notes of triumph and self-elation, but thundering in our ears the everlasting *lie*—making us Infidels in the great world of Freedom—raising up to ourselves idols of wood and stone, inscribed with the name of Deity, where the one invisible and true God can never dwell. The blood of the heroes of '76 has been shed in vain. The just expectations of Hamilton, and Franklin, and Sherman, and Morris, and Adams, of the North, are betrayed by the continuance of Slavery. The fond anticipations of Washington, and Jefferson, and Madison, and Mason, of the South, have not been realized. The great experiment of Republican Government has not been fairly tested. If the Union should not be perpetual, nor the American name be synonymous with that of Liberty in all coming time, Slavery is at once the cause, the crime and the avenger !

Are we indeed of that vaunted Saxon blood, which no dangers can appal, no obstacles obstruct, and shall we sit with shivering limbs and dewy feet by the running stream, with inane features and stolid gaze, expecting this flood of evils to flow past, leaving the channel dry ? We who can conquer all things else, shall we be here only subdued, ingloriously whispering with white lips, There is no remedy ? Are the fowls free in the

wide heavens—the fishes secure in the depths of the ocean—the beasts untrammelled in the forest wilds; and shall Man only—Man, formed in the image of Deity, the heir of immortality—be doomed to hopeless servitude? Yes, there is a remedy.

There is one of four consequences to which Slavery inevitably leads:—A continuance of the present relative position of the master and the slave, both as to numbers, intelligence, and physical power; Or an extermination of the blacks; Or an extermination of the whites; Or emancipation and removal, or emancipation and a community of interests between the races.

The present relative position between the blacks and whites (even if undisturbed by external influences, which we cannot hope,) cannot long continue. Statistics of numbers show that in the whole Slave States the black increases on the white population. The dullest eye can also see that the African, by association with the white race, has improved in intellect, and, by being transferred to a temperate climate, and forced to labor and to throw off the indolence of his native land, he is increasing in physical power; while the white, by the same reversed laws, is retrograding in the same respects. Slavery then cannot remain for ever as it is. That the black race will be exterminated seems hardly probable from the above reflections, and because the great mass of human passions will be in favor of the increase of the slaves *ad interim*. Pride, love of power, blind avarice, and many other passions are for it, and against it only fear in the opposite scale. We are forced, therefore, to the conclusion that the slave population must increase till there is no retreat but in extermination of the whites. Athens, Sparta, Sicily, and Rome nearly, Hayti in modern times, did fall by servile wars. I have shown elsewhere that the slavery of the blacks in the modern, is more dangerous than the slavery of the whites in the ancient system: then the intelligent slave was incorporated into the high caste of quondam masters, an eternal safety valve, which yet did not save from explosions eminently disastrous.

The negative of the second proposition, then, establishes the third, unless we avail ourselves of the last—*emancipation*. If my reasoning and facts be correct, there is not a sane mind in all the South who would not agree with me, that if we can be saved from the first named evils, by all means emancipate. *Emancipation is entirely safe*. Sparta and Athens turned the slaves by thousands into freedom with safety, who fought bravely for their common country. During the Revolution many emancipated slaves did good service in the cause of Liberty. We learn from Mr. Gurney, and other sources to be relied upon

that British West India emancipation has been entirely successful, and productive of none of those evils which were so pertinaciously foretold by interested pro-slavery men. The British have regiments of black men who make fine soldiers—protectors, not enemies of the empire. But above all, I rely not upon sound *a priori* reasoning only, but rather upon actual experience. There are in the United States, by the last census, 386,265 free blacks; 170,753 of whom are in the Free, the remainder in the Slave States. There are also 2,485,145 slaves—so that in fact about one-sixth of the whole black race in America are already free! No danger or evil consequence has ensued from the residence of these 386,265 freedmen among us. Who then will be so absurd as to contend that the liberation of the other five-sixths will endanger the safety or happiness of the whites? *I repeat, then, that emancipation is entirely safe.*

Emancipation must either be by the voluntary consent of the masters, or by force of law. I regard voluntary emancipation as the most probable, the most desirable, and the most practicable. For the slave-holding land-holder would not be less rich in consequence—the enhancement of the value of land would compensate for the loss in slaves. A comparison of the price of lands of equal quality in the Free and Slave States will prove this conclusively. If, however, by force of law—the law having once sanctioned slaves as property—the great principle which is recognized by all civilized Governments, that private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation—dictates that slaves should not be liberated without the consent of the masters, or without paying an equivalent to the owners. Under the sanction of law, one man invests the proceeds of his labor in slaves, another in land; in the course of time it becomes necessary to the common weal to buy up the lands for redistribution or culture in common—how should the tax be laid? Of course upon lands, slaves, and personal property—in a word, upon the whole property of the whole people. If, on the other hand, it should nearly concern the safety and happiness of society, both the slaveholder and the non-slaveholder, that slaves should be taken and emancipated, then by the same legitimate course of reasoning the whole property of the State should be taxed for the purpose. If emancipation shall take place by force of law, shall it be by the laws of the States or by the law of Congress?—Let Congress abolish Slavery wherever she has jurisdiction—in the military places, in the Territories, and on the high seas—and in the District of Columbia, if the contracts of cession with Virginia and Maryland allow.

I lay down the broad rule that Congress should

do no more for the perpetuation of Slavery than she is *especially* bound to do. The debates in the Federal Convention prove that the Free States did not intend to assume the responsibilities of Slavery. In the language of Roger Sherman and others, they could not acknowledge the right of "property in men." There is then no moral obligation in the Union to sustain the rights of the South in slaves, except only they are morally bound to regard the contract with the South, and in the construction of that compact the presumption in all cases of doubt is in favor of Liberty.—On the contrary, the United States are morally bound, by all means consistent with the Constitution, to extinguish Slavery. The word slave is not used in the Constitution, because the promises of all the Southern Members of the Convention led to final emancipation, and a noble shame on all hands induced the expulsion of the word from the charter of Human Liberty. I can not agree that there is any law superior to that of the Federal Constitution. It is the part of Christians to model human laws after the Divine code, but the law in the present state of light from on High, must be paramount to the Bible itself. If any other practice should prevail, the confusion of religious interpretations of the Divine Will would be endless and insufferable. In a country where Jews, and Christians, and Infidels, and Deists, and Catholics, and Protestants, and Frierists, and Mormonites, and Millerites, and Shakers, all are concentrated into one nation, it would be subversive of all governmental action that each sect should set up a Divine code as each "understands it," superior to the Constitution itself. If a case ever arises where conscience dictates a different doctrine—that the penalty of the law is rather to be borne than its prescriptions obeyed—then also there arises at the same time a case

where the sufferer must look to God only for approbation and sustainment—he has passed from all appeal to mankind.

I dissent, then, from the ultra anti-slavery and the ultra pro-slavery men. I cannot join the North in the violation of the Constitution—I cannot stand by the South in asking the moral sanction of the North; nor do I regard it as a breach of the Constitutional compact that she should seek a higher grade of civilization by using all legal means for the entire expulsion of Slavery in the United States. Congress having no power over Slavery in the States, the States, each one for itself, where its Constitution does not forbid, certainly has and should exercise the power of purchase and emancipation. In Kentucky, the Constitution forbids the Legislature to act upon the subject. We must therefore look to a Convention, or that which I most hope, to voluntary emancipation. Enlightened self-interest, humanity and religion are moving on with slow yet irresistible force to that final result. Let the whole North in mass, in conjunction with the patriotic of the South, withdraw the moral sanction and legal power of the Union from the sustainment of Slavery; then our existence as a People with undivided interests may yet be consummated. May the Ruler of all nations, the common Father of all men, who is no respecter of persons, and whose laws are not violated with impunity by individuals nor by States, move us to be just, happy and free! May that spirit which has eternally consecrated in the admiration of men Salamis and Marathon, and Bunker's Hill and Yorktown, inspire our hearts, till the glorious principles of '76 shall be fully vindicated, and throughout the land shall be established "Liberty and Union, one and inseparable, now and for ever."

C. M. CLAY.

Lexington, Ky. Nov. 1843.

EMANCIPATION—ITS EFFECTS.

Is Cassius M. Clay an Abolitionist ?

THE following is an extract from a noble Speech delivered by Mr. CLAY, in reply to Richard M. Johnson and others, at a meeting held at the White Sulphur Springs, Scott Co. (Ky.) Dec. 30th, to favor the Annexation of Texas to the Union. Col. Johnson having been called to preside, and resolutions affirming the policy of uniting Texas to the Union having been proposed and advocated by the Chairman and others, Mr. C. M. CLAY offered a substitute of opposite tenor, which he advocated in a glorious Speech. We do not care to publish so much of it as relates to the main question, for the Annexation of Texas, with Slavery existing therein, to this Union is as impossible as the falling of the sky. There was a time when this was possible, but now there appears to be no considerable party or section in favor of it, and we have no room to waste in opposition to a frustrated, by-gone mischief.

But there is a portion of Mr. Clay's remarks, taken in consideration with his position and the general aspects of the Slavery question, which deserves attention. Among the leading axioms of those (including the 'Liberty' candidate for President,) who advocate the Abolition of Slavery at so much per month, are these—1. That every slaveholder is to be regarded as an enemy of Human Rights, and proscribed, so far as possible, from all public station; 2. That nobody who belongs to either of the great Political parties can be favorable to Emancipation, but every Whig is, of necessity, 'Pro-Slavery,' and an enemy to Liberty for all; 3. That no man can be heard in opposition to Slavery in the Slave States, either orally or through the journals. Now, in refutation of these assumptions, we cite the case of CASSIUS M. CLAY, at this moment an ardent Whig and (at the time of making this speech) an extensive slaveholder, who has repeatedly spoken, both in the Kentucky Legislature and before the People, in earnest, powerful opposition to Slavery, and whose Speech is published in full in the leading journal of Kentucky, embodying such sentiments as the following :

"To say that I am an Abolitionist, in the sense in which the enemies of all moral progress would have you believe—that I would sanction insurrection and massacre—my wife, children, mother, brothers and sisters, and relations and friends, are all hostages for my sincerity, when, restraining myself to the use of courteous terms, I repel the unjust and dishonoring imputation. That I am an Abolitionist in the sense that I would take away, without just compensation, the rights of property in slaves, which the laws secure to me and to some thirty or forty thousand citizens of Kentucky, my letter to the Tribune, which is before the world, disproves.

"Still, sir, I am an Abolitionist. Such an Abolitionist as I have been from my boyhood.—Such an Abolitionist as I was in 1836, when I declared in my place in the House of Representatives, to which I was just then eligible, that if the Constitution did not give us power to protect ourselves against the infernal slave-trade, that I renounced it, and would appeal to a Convention for a new one. Such an Abolitionist as I was in 1840, when I declared in the same House of Representatives that I wished to place the State of Kentucky in such a position, by sustaining the law of 1833, that she could move at any time she

thought it conducive to her highest interest to free herself from Slavery. Such an Abolitionist as I have ever avowed myself in public speeches and writings to the People of this District, that if Kentucky was wise enough to free herself from the counsels of Pro-Slavery men, Slavery would perish of itself by voluntary action of masters and the irresistible force of circumstances which would convince the People to the use of free instead of slave labor, as every way most advantageous.—Such an Abolitionist as were the band of immortal men who formed the Federal Constitution, who would not have the word 'slave' in that sacred instrument, am I. Such an Abolitionist as was Washington—who, so far from lending countenance to the propagation of Slavery, as you are now doing, declared that on all proper occasions his influence and his vote should be cast for the extinguishment of Slavery among men—am I also. Such an Abolitionist as was Jefferson, the great father of Democracy, whom you all profess to follow—who foretold, what has since partially come to pass, that Slavery, if not destroyed, would jeopardize and finally extinguish the liberties of the whites themselves; who foresaw, with an unerring glance, that the Slavery of the black race if not remedied by the whites, would at last rem

edy itself—such an Abolitionist am I also. And being such, I take issue with the opinion which has been here to-day, as it has been often elsewhere, most dogmatically advanced, that the question is “whether the whites shall rule the blacks, or the blacks shall rule the whites.”—Such an issue is false in theory, false in practice, and as proven to be false by all experience. It is derogatory to human nature, and blasphemy against God himself.

“All America, except Brazil and the United States, have freed their slaves; and are the whites slaves in consequence? At the Revolution, on the day of the Declaration of Independence, all the States held slaves, not excepting Massachusetts. Now there are thirteen non-slaveholding States: are those ten millions of Northerners slaves? Great Britain, in conjunction with all Europe, except the miserable anarchies of Spain and Portugal, have long since emancipated many slaves; and now, in the year 1843, to her honor be it spoken, having liberated 30,000,000 of her East India serfs, in all her wide domains, which touch on every sea, and embrace every clime under the whole heavens, there is not, nor indeed can be, a single slave: and is she enslaved? No, she has sense enough to know, and heart enough to feel, that it is justice, honor and glory which secure the liberties of a People, and make them invincible and immortal.

“Do gentlemen take the absurd position that one hundred and eighty thousand freed men could enslave Kentucky? West India emancipation proves that the great majority of freed men could be employed economically in the same offices at small wages, which they now fill, with perhaps more ease and safety than now exist. But should they prove turbulent, for which there would be no cause—and which no man in his senses believes would happen—and were I disposed to indulge in that vaunting spirit, which to-day has so powerfully infected us, with five thousand such troops as these I have the honor to command, to whom gentlemen have been pleased to allude in a manner so complimentary at my expense, I would undertake to drive from the State the assembled one hundred and eighty thousand in arms. They further tell us, with most reverential gravity, that ‘God has designed some men for slaves, and man need not attempt to reverse the decree; it is better that the blacks should be slaves than the whites.’ This proposition, which I denounce as utterly false, passes away before the glance of reason, as the dew before a summer’s sun.

“I shall admit, merely for the sake of argument, that some men always have, and possibly

will perform menial offices for the more fortunate. Let the law of Nature or of God have its undisturbed action—let the performance of those offices be voluntary on the part of servants, and that beautiful harmony by which the highest intellect is united, by successive inferior links, to the lowest mind, will never be disturbed. The sensitive and highly organized and intellectual will gradually rise from service to command: the stolid, the profligate, the insensible and coarsely organized will sink into their places: the law of God and enlightened Freedom will still be preserved, and the greatest good to the greatest number be secured for ever. But when by municipal law, and not by the law of fitness, which is the law of Nature, not regarding the distinctions of morals, mind or body, whole classes are doomed to servitude, when the intellectual, the sensitive, the foolish, the rude, the good, the bad, the refined, the degraded, are all depressed to one level, never more to rise for ever, then comes evil—nothing but evil—like as from dammed up waters or pent up streams, floods and explosions come slowly, but come at last—so Nature mocks with temporary desolation at the obstacles man would oppose to her progress, and at length moves on once more in all the untrammelled vigor and unfading loveliness which, from eternity, was decreed.

“That the black is inferior to the white, I readily allow; but that Vice may depress the one, and Virtue by successive generations elevate the other, till the two races meet on one common level, I am also firmly convinced. Modern science, in the breeding and culture of other animals than man, has most fully proved this fact, which the ablest observers of man himself all allow, that mental and moral and physical development transmit their several properties to the descendants—corroborating by experience the Divine decree that the virtues and the vices of the father shall be visited on the children to the third and fourth generation. In the capitals of Europe, blacks have attained to the highest places of social and literary eminence. That they are capable of a high degree of civilization, Hayti daily illustrates. There we have lately seen a revolution, conducted in a manner that would do honor to the first People on earth, one of the avowed grounds of which was that President Boyer neglected to secure General Education to the People—a consideration that should make some vaunted States blush in comparison. After the expulsion of the tyrant, they set about forming a more Republican Constitution, admitting the whites, who had participated in their dangers and success, to all the rights of citizenship.

"If history be true, we owe to the Egyptians, said to be of the modern Moorish race, the arts and sciences, and our early seeds of civilization. How many centuries did it take to bring them to perfection! When we reflect how little time the negro race has been under the influences of other civilized nations, and the rapid progress they have made in an upward direction, we have no reason to treat them with that absurd contempt which in both the eye of reason and religion stands equally condemned. Why then, I am tauntingly asked, by both Pro-Slavery and Anti-Slavery men, do I hold slaves? Uninfluenced by the opinions of the world, I intend, in my own good time, to act, or not to act, as to me seems best in view of all the premises.* Yet, I thus far pledge

myself, that whenever Kentucky will join me in freeing ourselves from this curse, which weighs us down even unto death, the slaves I own she shall dispose of as to her seems best. I shall ask nothing in return, but the enhanced value of my land, which must ensue gradually from the day that we become indeed a free and independent State. I will go yet further—give me *free labor*, and I will not only give up my slaves, but I will agree to be taxed to buy the remainder from those who are unwilling or unable consistently, with a regard to pecuniary interest, to present them to the State; and then I shall deem myself and my posterity richer in dollars and cents even than we were before."

* Mr. Clay has since emancipated his slaves.

ON THE PRESIDENCY.

Communicated for the N. Y. Tribune.

LEXINGTON, Ky. March 20, 1844.

W. J. MCKINNEY, Esq. Mayor of Dayton, Ohio.

Dear Sir:—Your letter of February 15th last was in due time received, and I have waited thus long with the intention of not answering it at all, because, as I am a private citizen, not seeking office at the hands of the People, it might seem to place me in the presumptuous attitude of attempting to influence, by mere weight of opinion, the votes of my countrymen in their choice of President—when neither my age, experience nor fame warranted the assumption. But since the reception of your letter, I have received many of similar import from Liberty men and Anti-Slavery Whigs in most of the Northern States, pressing upon me an expression of opinion, in such a manner that I should prove false to that spirit of candor which I proudly cherish as characteristic of the principles which I advocate, did I, through any affectation of humility, remain longer silent. You ask me, "Will you, if you live and are able to vote at the approaching Presidential Election, vote for Henry Clay for President? If the Third Party, or Liberty men, should have an Electoral Ticket in your State, would you vote that ticket in preference? Were you a citizen of Ohio, which of these tickets would you vote?" The last two questions are such as would require va-

rious other suppositions to be made, before I could give a suitable answer in justice to myself and all the parties concerned, which would be too voluminous for the space of a single letter; and, for all practical purposes, they will be sufficiently answered in my reply to the first question, that *It is my most decided determination "to vote for HENRY CLAY for President."* Men never have and never will, in all cases, think alike: all Government is necessarily a sacrifice, to some extent, of individual will: that is the best Government to each individual which fosters or allows the most of what that individual believes to be conducive to his best interests. The question then is not, 'Can I find some man to vote for among seventeen millions, who thinks in all respects as myself?' but, 'Who is the man, all things present and remote considered, that will most probably be able by success to give effectuation to those great measures which I deem conducive to my welfare and the welfare of my whole Country?' This question every voter in the Republic must determine for himself. For myself, after looking calmly upon all the surrounding circumstances, Conscience, Patriotism, and (if others prefer the term) enlightened Self-Interest constrain me to vote for Henry Clay. The Tariff, the Currency, the Lands, Economy, Executive and Ministerial Responsibility, and many other

interests, all depend, in my humble judgment, on Mr. Clay's election for beneficial determination. And if he is elected, the decision of 1840, passed by the People, will be confirmed, and the policy of the Country settled. Then, and (such is the anarchy of the public mind) not till then, shall we have time to look about us, and project that other great reform—the reduction of American Slavery to its constitutional limits, and to concentrate the united condemnation of the civilized world to its final and utter extinction.

Mr. Clay is indeed a slaveholder. I wish he were not. Yet it does not become *me*, who have so lately ceased to be a slaveholder myself, to condemn *him*. It is not my province to defend Mr. Clay: this he is abundantly able to do himself.—It remains with posterity to determine how much shall be due him for the glorious impulse his fervent spirit has given to Liberty throughout the world; and with them also to say how much shall be subtracted from this appreciation, for his having only failed to do all that could be done in this holy cause. Cyrus, Themistocles, Plato, Cato, Aristides, Demosthenes, Cincinnatus and Cicero sacrificed to base heathen gods; yet no man, because they knew not the true God, will say that they were not religious, great, good and patriotic men. T. B. Macaulay, one of the most acute and enlightened men of this or any era, in his review of the life of Francis Bacon, justly says:

“We should think it unjust to call St. Louis a wicked man because, in an age in which toleration was generally regarded as a sin, he persecuted heretics. We should think it unjust to call Cowper's friend, John Newton, a hypocrite and a monster, because, at a time when the slave-trade was commonly considered by the most respectable people as an innocent and beneficial traffic, he went, largely provided with hymn-books and hand-cuffs, on a Guinea voyage. An immoral action, being in a particular society generally considered as innocent, is a good plea for an individual who, being one of that society, and having adopted the notions which prevail among his neighbors, commits that action.”

I cannot, then, because Mr. Clay is a slaveholder, in a community where the whole Christian Church of all denominations—the only professed teachers of morals among the People—are also slaveholders, proscribe him, for that single thing of difference between us.

In saying thus much in justification of my course in voting for Mr. Clay, I should be false to my own reputation, ungrateful to that large portion of Anti-Slavery men who have sympathized with me in my feeble efforts, in the cause of Universal Liberty, and recreant to that glorious cause itself, if I did not avow my belief that

the time is near at hand when public sentiment will not, ought not, and can not hold the slaveholder guiltless. Yes, I will go yet farther, and declare, in the name of the Christian Religion and our Republican Institutions, based professedly on the principle of ‘the greatest good to the greatest number,’ that no man, after the next Presidential Election, when so much light shall have been shed upon this subject, should be deemed fit to rule over a Republican, Christian People, who shall violate, by holding slaves, the only two principles upon which either Christianity or Republicanism can stand the test of philosophical scrutiny for a single moment.

In conclusion, in refutation of the slanders of the Washington Globe—which are ever harmless where that print is known—in justice to Mr. Clay, and in vindication of my own self-respect, you will allow me to say that my opinions and my action upon the subject of Slavery are all my own; that however much I may esteem Mr. Clay as a man, a Statesman, and a friend—though I may regard him as one of the most frank, noble, practical, wise, eloquent and patriotic of those who, in this or any other age, have assumed to govern a great Nation—the Editor of the Globe but makes exhibition of his own ignoble spirit, when he insinuates that Henry Clay would play a double part to deceive the American People, by dictating to me; or that I, humble as I may be in the estimation of my country, would be used by him, or any other man, or set of men, for any dishonorable purpose, or be treated with upon any other terms than those of absolute equality.

Trusting that your wishes, as well as the purposes of those persons who have done me the honor to address me by letter upon this subject, will be best subserved by making this answer public, I send it at once to the press.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. M. CLAY.

P. S.—Reform, in Jeremy Bentham's day, was termed “innovation;” this owl-faced age has improved in this respect—now “fanaticism” is the word—a strong word—yet, when will Americans learn it! there is a still stronger word than this—“*Truth*.” If there be really in all this wide Union a single man of the McDuffie school, of good sense, cool, calculating, quick in the discernment of the “pith o' things,” and above all no “enthusiast,” let him read Thomas Carlyle's “*Sphinx*” in the “Past and Present,” and then tell us whether there be a “*Sphinx*” also in America; and solve us the riddle! The description covers four pages—will not “the land of tracts” look to it?

C. M. C.